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United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea
Sixth meeting
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Note verbale dated 27 May 2005 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan presents its compliments to the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and, with reference to the Division's letter dated 22 February 2005 regarding the sixth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, has the honour to enclose its inputs on the two areas of focus: (a) fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development; and (b) marine debris (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Pakistan would be grateful if the present note and its annex would be issued as a document of the Consultative Process.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 27 May 2005 from the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Environment

I. Fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development

1. The fisheries sector in Pakistan makes a small but significant contribution to Pakistan's economy. The fisheries sector employs around 1 per cent of the civilian labour force, which is mostly unskilled. The major portion of the export earnings in this sector is from shrimp. Shrimp have been harvested without consideration of the life cycle stages needed in order to maintain sustainable yields. Owing to the rising level of effort, the catches per unit of effort (CPUE) have decreased considerably. The rest of the capture-fisheries subsector is characterized by the underutilization of existing stocks. Aquaculture (mariculture) is almost absent in Pakistan. As the majority of shrimp habitat areas in Pakistan are close to coastal villages, these areas remain the locus of small-scale fishing activities throughout the year. This continuous practice of small-scale fishing has affected Pakistan's shrimp habitats. We can overcome this problem by:

(a) Implementation of a two-month ban on catching shrimp;

(b) Alternate sources of income during these months;

(c) Promoting aquaculture (mariculture);

(d) Improving fishing skills.

Policies/measures that can be adopted to overcome fisheries problems

1. Use sea fisheries fully, bringing annual harvesting up to the limit of sustainable yields;

2. Protect and restore shrimp fishing habitats restricting harvesting to the level of annual sustainable yields;

3. Poverty reduction in fishermen communities;

4. Reducing pollution in marine water.

Measures

1. Use sea fisheries fully, bringing annual harvesting up to the limit of sustainable yields:

(a) Facilitate deep sea fishing;

(b) Stock assessment for better fisheries;

(c) Harvest fisheries on a sustainable yield basis;

(d) Protect fisheries against pollution.

2. Protect and restore shrimp fishing habitats restricting harvesting to the level of annual sustainable yields:

(a) Alternate sources of income;

(b) Declare marine protected areas;

(c) Harvest fisheries on a sustainable yield basis;

(d) Protect fisheries against pollution;

(e) Restoration/afforestation of the mangrove forest to compensate habitat loss;

(f) Advocate at the policy level for the release of maximum water downstream in order to avoid sea intrusion.

3. Poverty reduction in fishermen communities:

(a) Facilitate deep sea fishing;

(b) Alternate sources of income;

(c) Harvest fisheries on a sustainable yield basis;

(d) Enhance aquaculture (mariculture) activities;

(e) Poverty alleviation programmes involving fishermen in market economy from subsistence use;

(f) Improving health facilities;

(g) Improving nutrition.

4. Reducing pollution in marine water:

(a) Advocacy for maximum water supply to the sea to increase the dilution factor;

(b) Sewage treatment plants;

(c) Advocate with thermal companies for control of thermal pollution;

(d) Close link with port authorities for control of oil pollution;

(e) Awareness among the fisherfolk communities to reduce pollution from fishing boats.

II. Marine debris

2. Sources of marine debris are:

(a) Domestic sewage/waste from a city of more than 10 million people;

(b) About 45 per cent of Pakistan's industry (by value added) is located in Karachi;

(c) Waste from two ports (Karachi and Port Qasim) and four fishing harbours: Karachi port and harbour are the most heavily used areas and the greatest pollution is seen both from vessels and from the port's oil terminal;

(d) Wastes from steel mills, power plants and refineries.

3. Most of the toxic wastes of Karachi are dumped at sea. These toxic wastes are producing several problems, which are:

(a) Eutrophication caused by pollution from sewage (or other organic biodegradable such as fish processing wastes) through increasing overall biomass in the form of algal bloom has reduced economically important marine fauna;

(b) Thermal pollution;

(c) Increased turbidity;

(d) Siltation;

(e) Mangrove degradation;

(f) Health problems for the coastal communities.

4. If present trends continue, with no checks instituted, it is expected that the present zone of oxygen deficient bottom conditions in Karachi harbour will extend to cover most of the area and its backwaters. These conditions will slowly spread into the creeks, with serious consequences to marine bottom dwelling species and benthic fauna.

Policies/measures that can be adopted to overcome these problems:

Solid waste

1. Promote reuse and recycling by privatization of refuse collection;

2. Encourage marketing assistance for the effective use of scavenging systems.

Measures

- Develop an effective municipal garbage purchase mechanism at intermediate delivery points;
- Promote energy production from waste and composting plants by the private sector;
- Ensure proper sanitary landfill practices;
- Establish incentive and control systems.

Effluents

1. Adopt domestic water treatment technologies that provide for recovery and reuse of water, nutrients and organic matter in ways that are safe and profitable to the operator;

2. Focus the regulatory approach on industrial discharge, as these contain some of the toxic effluents;

3. Support the recovery and use of heavy metals from industrial effluents.

Measures

- Develop systems for safe sewage irrigation;
- Encourage source reduction, through recovery by industrial units of heavy metals before discharge;
- Establish legal, institutional and pricing systems to support these measures.